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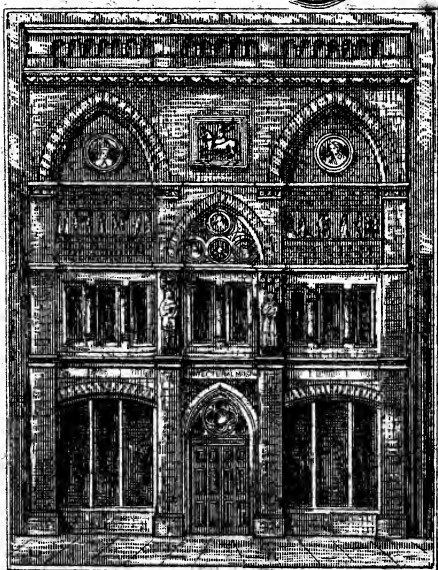
BASKETS OF JEWELS.

"A VISIT TO THE ARCHITECTURAL MUSEUM."

WRITTEN FOR STUDENTS BY

John P. Seddon, F.R.I.B.A.

OUR OWN BASKET.



THE ROYAL ARCHITECTURAL MUSEUM.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS & COPIES OF SKETCHES
BY T. RAFFLES DAVISON, IN THE BRITISH ARCHITECT.

19

A VISIT TO THE
Architectural Museum.

Written for Students

BY

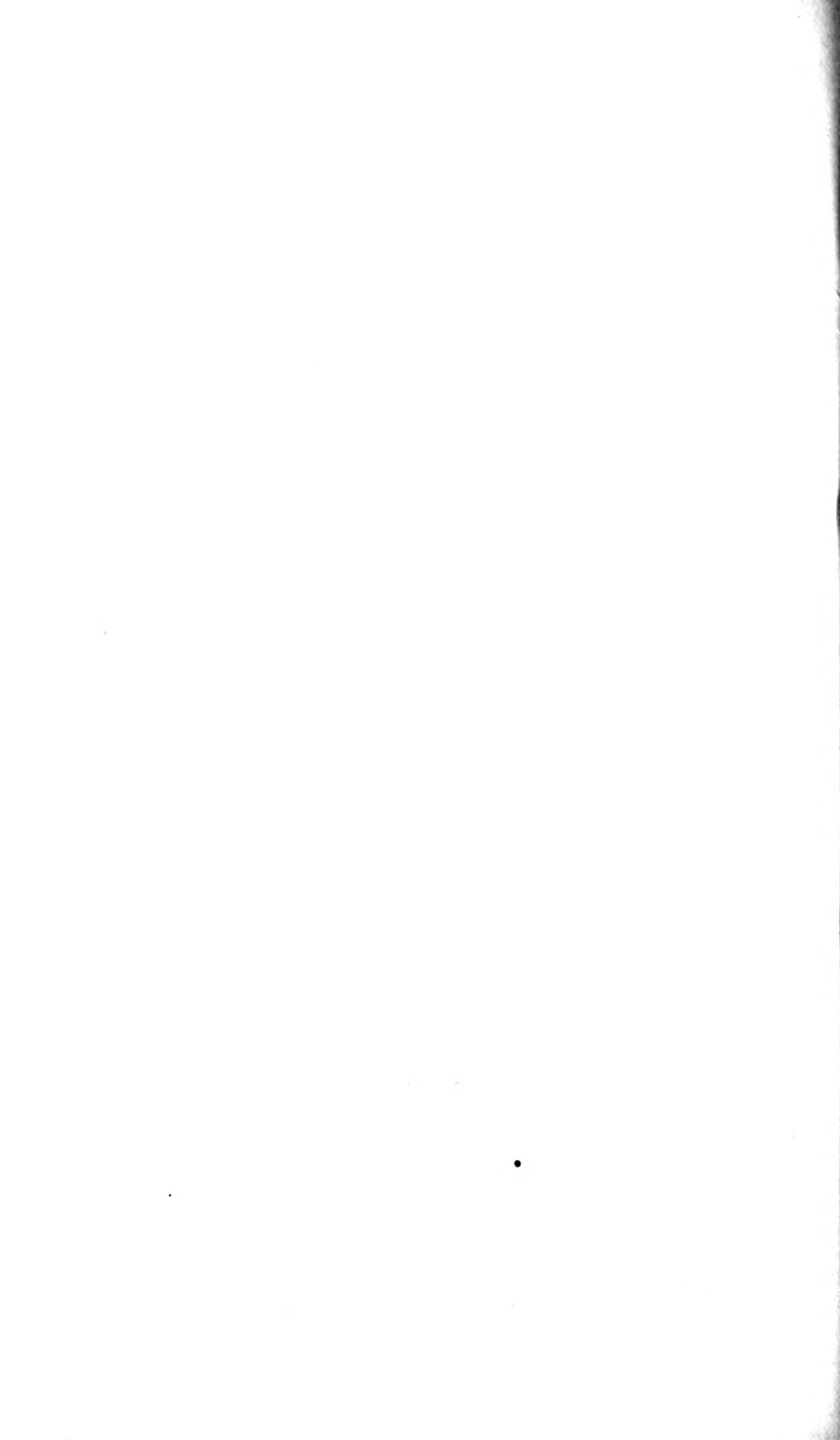
JNO. P. SEDDON, F.R.I.B.A.

With Sketches from the Museum by T. Raffles Davison.

—
DECEMBER, 1884.
—

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C. F. KELL, Lithographer, 8, Castle Street, Holborn.



PREFACE.

CASKETS of Jewels, without exaggeration, were those buildings of old in which Architecture, Painting, and Sculpture were combined, and from which the treasures contained in this, our own Casket of the Architectural Museum of London, were gathered.

Jewels owe much to their setting, and the rough diamond has but little lustre till polished and treated as a stone of price. Painting and Sculpture also are but isolated gems, that lose half their value if not designed for a purpose, and the highest purpose they can have is that of decoration, and not exposure in a sale-room.

Our own Casket, the Architectural Museum, is one crammed with the choicest jewels of art, heirlooms from all ages, collected under exceptionally favourable circumstances which can never recur. Greece and Rome have yielded us Classic works—Venice and Verona the choicest Italian—and France, Germany, and the British Isles, the best of the Mediæval period.

Here, even better than the originals, can the casts be handled and examined. Here they have a practical and educational utility, which, from the facilities of comparison afforded, it is simply impossible to surpass.

JOHN P. SEDDON,
Architect.

1, *Queen Anne's Gate, Westminster,*
1st Dec. 1884.



A VISIT TO THE ARCHITECTURAL MUSEUM.

THE object of my address on the present occasion is to prove the unique value of this Museum, and to solicit for it the interest and support of another generation of architects from that which founded it, and to induce them to take up and complete the work of their predecessors. Its unique value consists in its comprehensiveness, and its essentially practical character. It cannot pretend to house monuments, such as the Column of Trajan, or the noble portal of Santiago de Compostella, or the other full-sized copies of architectural treasures that find room in the noble galleries of South Kensington; but it has a yet wider, if not so lofty a grasp, than that ambitious collection. Certainly no other Museum out of England can vie with it in point of catholicity; for our continental neighbours are sublimely indifferent to or else ignorant of the vast and valuable stores of English architectural ornament.

Mons. Viollet-le-Duc has ably and fully treated of the figure and ornamental mediæval sculpture of his country, and he has not said one word too much for it. His claim may be conceded at once, that the sculpture of the Isle de France of the thirteenth century rivalled, and even surpassed, in many respects, that of Greece itself in the age of Pericles; and the Domaine Royale of France was the veritable Attica of the Middle Ages. Nevertheless, he

hardly seems to have been aware that the different styles of the Gothic of France, in comparison with that of England, were ever but *half baked*, their cooking having been too fast and furious. In our tight little isle the several successive phases of that most wonderful development of Christian art were each brought to a degree of perfection, which the very fervour of the tentative energy in France prevented from being attained there. Granting that the central creative furnace was in Paris, with lesser distinct fires in other provinces of France, they were fed with fuel from too many various sources to admit of a common harmonious result. Hence, though France outstripped in grandeur of conception all its rivals in Christendom, it never paused to systematise and work out thoroughly any of its numerous ideals. It seized hold of one element of architectural beauty after another, only to leave them as soon, in its hurried, frenzied straining to reach the "excelsior" of its aim; and comet-like, mounting higher and higher, it at last plunged into a wild and brilliant, but downward course, and blazed itself out, as a meteor, before it was superseded by the Renaissance.

The gradual development of mediæval art in England was wholly different. Here, though doubtless each ideal was in succession imported from France, it arrived at maturity, and without all the embryo stages. It was received and dealt with in our characteristic insular sobriety of manner, and was then formulated and worked out with plenty of strong native individuality; so much so, that it was no easy task to trace whence the inspiration was drawn, and the result, though less ambitious, was more complete. Westminster Abbey, for instance, though more than usually French in conception among English buildings (as was to be expected from its being the work of our Henry III.), has no exact prototype in France. It is truly an English elaboration under foreign influence, with all our

insular perfection and character of detail and proportion, but without any such startling artistic effects as were then commonly aimed at in France, and not always realized.

In France and on the Continent generally, the separate contending elements of Romanesque and Byzantine were mingled in very variable proportions. These so maintained their influence, which is traceable, more or less, almost to the end of the mediæval period: like the distinctly coloured waters of the Rhine and the Moselle, flowing side by side, separately, yet together. They were overwhelmed, rather than amalgamated, at last, by the ever-increasing flood of Gothic elements ; while in England they were soon absorbed, and ceased to modify the colour of the general current at all.

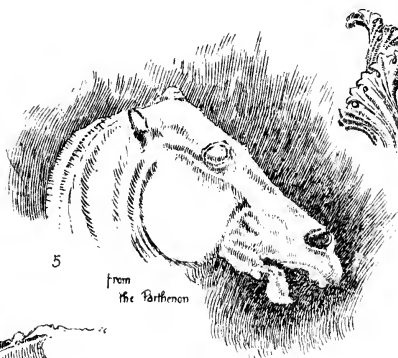
Thus it is that Amiens and Salisbury, commenced and finished about the same time (1217 to 1274 A.D.), show so strongly their respective national characteristics. The lofty vaulted nave of the former soars heavenward, so that could its towers have followed in like proportion, it seems as if they must have cleft the clouds ; but, as there are limits to human ambition, they fail to rise much higher than its ridge, and the aspiration of the whole building is sacrificed to that of a part. Whereas Salisbury, more modest throughout, preserve sa proper pyramidal outline ; and if its ideal be tamer, it is more completely realized.

It is the same with the sculptured ornament. In France, capitals from some conventional Gallo-Roman or Byzantine type are found side by side with others wholly Naturalesque, and square abaci incongruously crown both. In England no such discord prevails, as the square abacus was soon discarded, with the transitional style to which it belonged ; and circular and octagonal ones harmonise gracefully with the elegant conventional foliage of the thirteenth century and the later natural type of the fourteenth respectively.

In this Museum alone can these and other types of ornament be examined, and handled if need be, for purposes of comparison. Here the architectural student and carver may study at their convenience details brought from the finest buildings both of Pagan and Christian times. Here the history of the civilized world is to be read, as written in stones by the builders of all ages. I shall try to show you how consecutive it is, and hope to induce you to treat it as a library of reference, to which you may and should continually resort.

The far East has ever been the quarry whence materials for ornamental art have been drawn. But, though full of original and beautiful design, it has never attained the restrained and refined character which befits and constitutes architectural style. Yet the more highly civilized Western world has always prized Oriental art, and turned to it for inspiration. Just as we import Eastern goods, so doubtless the Greeks and Romans and the Venetian and Genoese merchants throughout the Middle Ages brought to Europe as luxuries the richly-carved and woven goods of the East. The character of this Oriental art has always been conventional and stereotyped. It has been the slave of priestcraft and tyranny, and divorced from that intellectual freedom which has been the mainspring of the arts in the West.

The limits of the space in such a Museum as this precludes its possession of many examples of this class. Here we want the works of mature art, and not its materials. Still, there is here a series of original carvings in stone from the ruins of one of the ancient capitals of India, in the great desert of Rajpootana, of the date of about 1100 A.D. These are sufficiently representative of the general character of Oriental art, which changes little from age to age. They may be referred in a comparative point of view, and as ornament they have many admirable qualities. They are



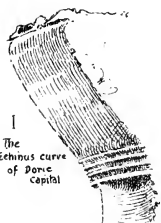
from
the Parthenon



sharp pointed
Greek
acanthus
foliage



Anglo-Saxon
balusters
St Mary
in the
Castle
Dover



1
The
Sphinxus curve
of Doric
capital



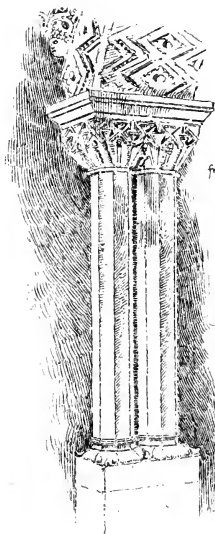
4
round-lobed foliage (Roman)
Temple of Jupiter Stator



8 Panel from the font in E. Meon church A.D. 1100



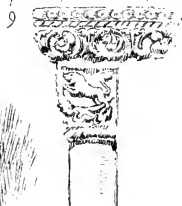
Anglo-Saxon
from over the channel arch of
the Saxon church at Bradford
Wilts



Romanesque
from
Stridlington
Priory
10



from Barfreston Church door



A Visit to The Architectural Museum

No 1
see article by John P. Seddon *frsba*



(ornamental capital)
(Temple of Vesta)

full of fancy and are elaborately rich, and have a bossy, sculpturesque effect, with crowds of figures, elephants, horses in trappings, and grotesques. They seem, however, more suitable to decorate furniture than any monumental building.

There is here a considerable and valuable collection of Classic casts, whence may be traced the parentage of all subsequent styles. Here are embodied the Greek highly intellectual ideals, with perhaps the greatest material perfection ever attained in art. The typical Doric and Ionic orders, to be studied here in models, may or may not be indebted for suggestions of sundry details to objects found amidst the chaos of Oriental art, but are virtually creations of the gifted Greeks. Dealing now only with the decorations of these orders, in Nos. 120 to 125 (top floor—Sketch No. 5), we have examples of the figure and animal sculpture of the Parthenon, and may note in them the noble abstraction of natural form, in calm and unimpassioned excellence; and yet, fitted as are the ornament and its framework—the order—to each other, they have not grown together. The sculpture is separable from the architecture, and has the look of studio work about it, and seems to be as much or more at home in the British Museum, where all its exquisite detail can be studied, as on the shelf of the pediment of the temple, where a large part of it would necessarily be lost.

We see in the echinus curve of the Doric capitals, Nos. 176 to 179 (top floor—Sketch No. 1), the prototype, as Mr. Ruskin points out, of all the convex capitals of the later world; and in the hollow one of the Corinthian capital of the Temple of Vesta, No. 24 (Sketch No. 2), that of all the concave capitals of later times. Then again, in the sharply pointed Greek leafage, as in No. 7 (Sketch No. 3), and in that of the Choragic monument of Lysicrates, Nos. 90 to 100, we can trace the origin of the later Byzantine work,

which influenced so widely Western art ; and in the round-lobed Roman foliage of the Temple of Jupiter Stator, No. 6 (Sketch No. 4), that of its still more widely-diffused rival, the Romanesque. Both these may have been primarily derived, as stated, from varieties of the natural acanthus plant ; but then each type has become highly conventionalised ; and, though in the Greek example it is very freely carved, throughout the Classic period all ornament was subordinated to the exigencies of the architectural framework, so that not a leaf must wander, or presume to have a sweet will of its own, but stand in its ordered rank with its fellows, all identically, and somewhat monotonously, alike.*

At the fall of Rome, whose architecture and ornamentation had been in keeping with its politically pompous character, and consistent with its Pagan religious *motifs*, Europe was left strewn with the *debris* of Classic monuments. Then in the Western part of the Empire the round-lobed acanthus was feebly copied by the rude invaders, together with grotesques more to their mind ; while in the Eastern half, nearer Greece, the sharp-leaved variety remained the fashion, and lingered long in Syrian cities, till the inhabitants thereof were swept away by the Ottoman invasion. European art thus slumbered through the Dark Ages, with most, and yet feeble, life at Constantinople, and there in a strictly conventional and hierarchial manner, until Charlemagne strove in the eighth century to effect a renaissance of art in Europe by help of artists from Constantinople. His success was but small and short-lived, but has yet left its effects, principally in Germany, where it followed the northward course of the Rhine ; and

* The Ionic capital, so thoroughly conventional, seems to have but little influence comparatively, and yet I noticed but the other day at Christchurch, Hants, capitals more resembling its volutes than the caulicolæ of the Corinthian.

it was owing to this that the German developments of the Romanesque and Gothic took a distinct character of their own.

Christianity was, during this long interregnum of art down to 1000 A.D., welding together for future use the several elements of the antique types of both Greece and Rome, supplied by the remains of the works of the Roman Empire, with fresh material derived from the undisciplined freedom and energy of the barbarian invaders ; and it was at the same time teaching a higher spiritual ideal and a truer system of construction, founded upon common sense, than that of the Romans.

Christendom awoke with the commencement of the eleventh century, and the Church directed the new-born efforts after art. It did not disdain the Pagan materials which it found to its hand ; for thence in Rome and the western part of Europe it developed the plan of the Latin cross, the construction of vaulting, the round arch, and the ornament of the round-lobed acanthus foliage. This is the style of the *Romanesque*. Simultaneously in Byzantium and the Eastern Empire it produced the Greek cross plan, the domical construction, and the sharp-leaved Greek acanthus ornamentation which formed the *Byzantine style*. The Crusades* blended both these together, and brought the East and the West face to face, and the Christians who joined them learned art lessons even of their Saracenic foes. At the same time merchants imported from Constantinople and Damascus into France eastern stuffs, jewellery, carvings and paintings. Another strange influence had before been brought by the Scandinavian sea rovers to the north-east coast of Europe, to England, Ireland, Normandy, and Poitou, and the Normans had taken another to Sicily, as also the Lombards to North Italy, while direct Oriental influence had been brought to Venice, Ravenna, and

* First Crusade, 1098 A.D. ; second, 1117 A.D. ; third, 1189 A.D.

Perigucux. Of this pre-Norman period, which would be the Saxon of England, this museum has but casts of some turned balusters from Dover (Sketch No. 6) of a Runic cross, and of two most interesting figures of angels, the originals of which are over the chancel arch of the Anglo-Saxon church of Bradford, in Wilts (Sketch No. 7).

Out of all these several elements was developed variously in Germany, Lombardy, France, and England, the Romanesque of the eleventh century. This is the style of the round arch called Norman with us, massive in character, and admirably adapted to be representative of the feudal system. It lasted till 1115 A.D. At first it was plain and simple, as seen in the chapel of the Tower of London. Its English character of ornament is represented by the casts of the archaic fonts of Winchester and East Meon (Sketch No. 8), the originals of which are in black marble (date about 1080). As the style advanced the ornamentation became richer and more refined, and we see it in its perfection in the cast in the museum of the beautiful doorway of Barfreton Church (Sketch No. 9) and in the fine fragments from Bridlington Priory (Sketch No. 10). But that of the monumental slab from Lewes Abbey of Gundreda, the daughter of William the Conqueror, is of special beauty and interest. In it may be seen the influence of Byzantine works in the sharp-leaved Greek acanthus-like foliage, the pearled stems and doubled ends of the leaflets.

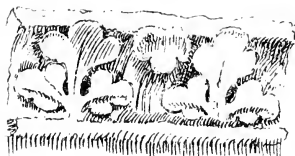
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In figure sculpture we find the French far ahead of us, and in the casts from the west doorway of Chartres Cathedral (see Sketches A, B, D) in the museum, and a drawing of one of its figures presented by Mr. Ruskin, we see the strong Byzantine influence in the treatment of the body and its dress, which, though of local French character, has the straight folds and rigid lines found in

A



B



from
Gartres

C



Gypl
York Minster

D

A Visit
to the
Architectural
Museum

No 2

see Article

by John P. Seddon F.R.I.B.A.

E



Part of
quatrefoil panel
from
the E. end of
Sanctuary
Notre Dame
Paris
A.D. 1300 circa

"Death of
The Virgin"

Combining
of T. & A. Seddon
No 206



Byzantine triptychs, while the face is evidently a study from nature. All these points show strongly conflicting influences at work in France from which England seems to have been free.

Again, in the casts of the fine capitals from the eastern portion of the crypt of York Minster (Nos. 324, 1035, on first floor, see Sketch C), we may note not only the Byzantine sharp leafage, but the manner of the carving cut down into the surface of its convex outline, which has become unlike that of the Doric echinus—viz., straight at bottom and bending out at top—but the reverse, which shape, as Mr. Ruskin says, is the truer supporting form, and the essentially characteristic one of the Byzantine convex capital.

The twelfth century (1115 to 1190) is the period known in England as the *Transitional*, as that in which round and pointed arches were mixed—the latter for constructional reasons, to meet the difficulties of vaulting; the former by choice, as a matter of taste for ornament. In England this phase was wrought out to great perfection, as in the round part of the Temple Church in London, with greater elegance than the Norman, and yet with sufficient solidity; so that, as Mr. Sharpe used to contend, it seemed to have reached almost the zenith of architectural excellence—since the Early English, which followed it, though more graceful, is almost too slight in construction. In Germany also this phase embraces its noblest works: but in France it can hardly be distinguished from other periods, the whole course of Gothic there having been and remaining in continual transition. In ornament it is marked here by the square abacus, combined with endless varieties of the development of the Norman cushion-like capital into embryo conventional foliage. The museum contains a remarkable series of capitals from St. David's Cathedral (Nos. 69 to 82), in which this process is seen in every stage.

At this period in France great exertions were being made to emancipate architectural ornament and sculpture from traditional trammels, and to discover new types to study. Several distinct schools existed, which are thus classified by M. Viollet-le-Duc: (1) that of the Rhine Provinces, which may be well studied in Mr. Sharpe's "Ornamentation of the Transitional Period in Central Germany;" (2) that of Toulouse; (3) that of Limoges; (4) of Provence; and (5) that of the Clunisians. Of these we have in the museum an interesting and picturesque example of the Toulouse school, based on the study of the rich Oriental imports.

The school of Cluny was, however, at that date, the most progressive, and under its powerful monastic establishments in Burgundy, great efforts were made to get rid of the traditional conventional types by a closer study of nature and reference to the paintings from Byzantium, which were greatly in advance of the Byzantine sculptured triptychs, which were taken as models elsewhere. Of this school we have Nos. 397-400 and 500 from the Abbey of Vezelay.

We thus see throughout the Continent a strange seething and mingling of various influences during the twelfth century, with general dissatisfaction with what had previously existed, and a straining after new, or rather foreign, elements, auguring great things in future, but failing then to realise their ideal. Also we note that the clerical direction was dominant, which permitted and even urged artists to progress, but that only to a limited extent. In the series of casts from Notre Dame, Paris (see Sketches A, B, C, D, E), the marked variety and unrest are strongly marked. The Byzantine element is predominant in some, while others recall the Gallo-Roman, and others seem prematurely Naturelesque, and the specially French type of capital called "*a crochet*" is making its appearance.

In England our aims seem then to have been lower, and confined to simpler but more original working out of new types of ornament, springing, however, directly from the Anglo-Norman. This can be well studied in Mr. Sharpe's "Ornamentation of the Transitional Period in England," and in a host of examples the casts of which are in this museum; and as Sir Gilbert Scott says in his admirable Guide, "It is difficult to select special types owing to an *embarras de richesse*."

Late in the century the English transition, as pointed out by that high authority, became strongly influenced by that of France, owing to the employment of William of Sens as architect at Canterbury Cathedral, where, among other foreign details, appear the Byzantinesque version of the Corinthian capital and the crocket type. Henceforth till its close we find the latter especially constantly mixed with our own insular work, as at Glastonbury and the Temple Church.

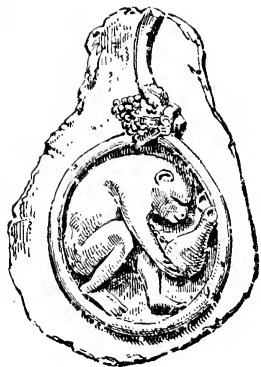
The thirteenth century ushered in an entirely new era in art throughout Christendom (1190 to 1245): tradition was then thrown aside and the ecclesiastical trammels broken down. This movement on the Continent has been well described by M. Viollet-le-Duc: he attributes it to the freedom and emulation of a new lay school, fostered by the prelates of municipalities, in opposition to the monastic establishments and feudal system, without foreseeing its tendency to become independent even of themselves.

The Isle de France, or Domaine Royale, with Paris as its centre, was the head-quarters of this noble school, although Amiens, Rheims, Rouen, Chartres, and other cathedral towns followed close in its wake. The amount and quality of the work done in these was truly astonishing. From Notre Dame in Paris we have here as representative of its fine figure sculpture (Nos. 1280-1282), three bas-relief panels, representing the Death, Assumption, and

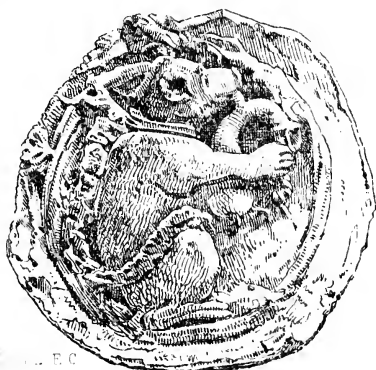
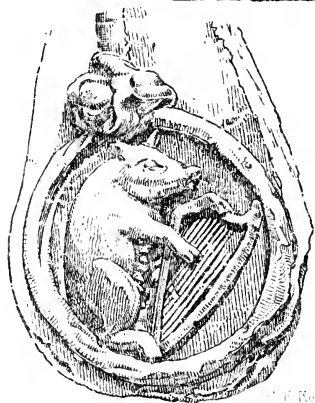
Funeral of the Virgin, from the aisle of the chevet of that cathedral. Nothing can surpass the sweet serenity of the countenance of the Virgin in the first of this series, or the pathos in the pained expressions of the several spectators (see Sketch E). In the Assumption the principal figure is most dignified and graceful, and the hovering angels charming. The scene of the Funeral is very dramatic, and contains a humorous passage, in that of the two irreverent lads, who have been miraculously punished for mocking the ceremonial; one of these has fallen to the ground without his hands that he had dared to lay on the sacred coffer. These remain attached to that, as also does his companion, bodily. (See Sketch E 2),

But a still nobler work is that of the group in full relief of the subject of "Noli-me-tangere" from the same cathedral. (See Sketch F.) Here is dramatic sculpture indeed, with admirable expression in attitudes and features! The gracious shrinking yet revealing posture of our Lord's figure, with its lovely countenance, together with that of the refined adoring females who are regarding Him, touches a higher note than even the far more perfect work in mere material qualities of the Parthenon, which, being placed close above, can be easily compared. Here we have not only intellect, but soul; and the Christian ideal far surpasses the Pagan, even if it do not reach its aim so completely. One feels here the "Excelsior" which is beyond human attainment, and that even the suggestion of such is better than the fuller realisation of a lower one.

Nor are the English examples in the Museum of the figure sculpture of this prolific period far behind. Professor Cockerell has done justice to the splendid choir of angels from the spandrels of the clerestory of Lincoln Cathedral, which are quite original in idea, and full of sentiment and actual beauty, both of expression, attitude, and drapery. The graceful figures from the Westminster



E²



Chapter House are somewhat French in type ; but when we think of the magnificent sculptured conceptions of the façades of Wells Cathedral, and of the character of its sculptures in detail, as well as of those of Lincoln, we may feel that we have works of which our nation may be almost as proud as M. Viollet-le-Duc is justly of those of the great French school of the thirteenth century.

When, however, we turn to the ornamental carving, I think we may claim the palm. There is no hesitation in English work of this date as to what type it should follow, while that of France seems yet embarrassed by the multitude of types to choose from, and to be retarded by its own restless energy and want of concentration. We may have learned from our neighbours to go to nature for study, but we have studied its essence to better purpose, and not lost ourselves in its detail. Here, at any rate, all the old traditional types were discarded, and no further help sought in Oriental sources ; whereas in France, even yet, square abaci and Byzantine and Corinthian elements still appear, even while wreathed with foliage so closely imitated as to have lost its true stone character.

In the arcades from the choir of the Cathedral of Paris, which are on the ground floor of the Museum, may be seen all this tentative energetic striving after novelty, together with the incongruity of the mixture of types and the lack of harmony in style, as compared with the calm and complete rhythm of contemporary English work. Their slender shafts and delicate bell-shaped capitals, with elegant crochet horns budding into foliage, carry heavy square abaci and poor unmoulded arches ; while in the sculptured bas-reliefs, among other exquisite compositions, is that of St. Michael and the Dragon, which M. Viollet-le-Duc says "possesses all the best qualities of sculpture, viz., excellent composition of lines, arrangement of masses, movement felt and expressed, sobriety of means, and nobleness of style,

rivalling the best works of antiquity." Turn thence and watch the lovely mouldings from the west doorway of St. Alban's, with its rich bosses of the Early English characteristic foliage, with the perfect capitals with their graceful circular abaci, and it must be acknowledged that, leaving out of the question the higher figure sculpture, the Continental work is far inferior to this refined and accomplished work of the same time in England. We have in the Museum two French scrollwork ornaments from Notre Dame, Paris, of nearly the same date, the one a version of the well-known ancient Roman in design, with Gallo-Roman conventional foliage of fine execution, while the latter is an almost purely *Naturalesque* of some conventionalised type, but equally with the other a noble piece of ornament.

Then of our Early English foliage, what a creation it is! From what plant was it taken? Who knows and who cares? It has the spirit of vegetation, and not its body only. It grows! and yet is stone! Look at that from the Cathedral of Llandaff (Nos. 239 to 254). (See Sketches G.) No Greek work ever had such grace and such life; the *acanthus* foliage of the Choragic monument of Lydicrates is dead beside it. It springs from its elegant stems with such vigour and yet delicate gradation, and its leaves spread out into trefoils and other equal ideal shapes, with perfect truth of form and curvature. Or take some of the spandrils from Wells west front, on a simpler, bolder, and larger scale, and yet equally well drawn and modelled; or those from Stone Church. But the examples are endless, and never monotonous.

These English carvers took the early spring budding vegetation for their type, as it pushes out of the ground with all the vigour of its youth. They saw its suitability for the material and purpose, but the French were already hankering for the developed leaves, and soon began



H

from
Nuremberg



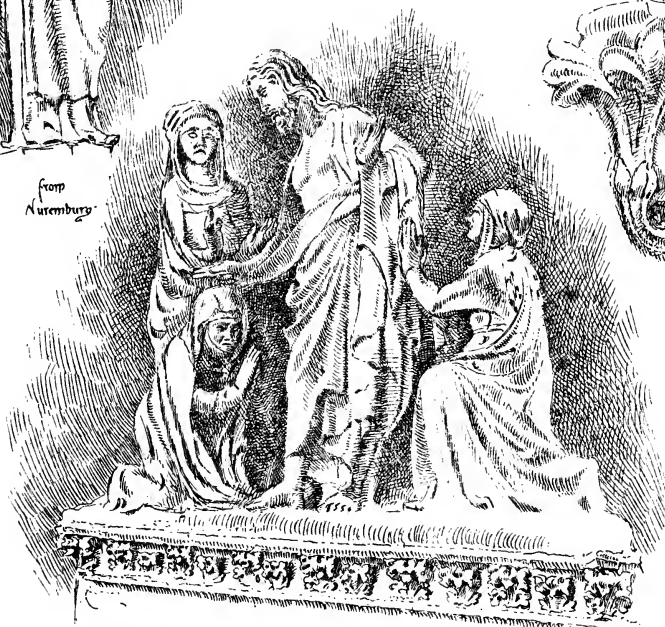
G

from Hildesheim



G

from
Hildesheim



F

"Noli me Tangere"

H



from
Nuremberg

A Visit to the Architectural Museum

No 3

see Article

by John P. Seddon F.R.I.B.A.

Rambling Sketches by T. Reffes Davison No 965



twining wreaths of them, as if plucked and bound round and not growing out of the stone capitals. Now, the English foliage is in accord with the stems, and forms graceful horns, not so obtrusive as, but more consistent than, the stiff French ones, at the end of which a few leaves are stuck, so that one wonders how they got or can remain there.

But I must leave, though with regret, this fascinating period of art ; nor will time permit me to speak of many other treasures of the thirteenth century stored in this Museum ; of the fragments of its jewel-like glass, from which our glass painters might learn much of which they seem ignorant or oblivious ; of the rich wrought ironwork from the great doorways of Notre Dame, Paris ; of the many fine effigies, and the lessons they can give in costume ;—I will only point out how here some things, like the casts of the splendid bosses from Chester, can be better studied, because easier reached, than even the originals themselves. This is the case also with the uniquely carved capital from the pier in the centre of the Westminster Chapter-house, which, unlike most mediæval works, is not happily treated for its position ; for though the leafage, executed in Purbeck marble, is of the most refined and exquisite class when it can be examined, as it can here, it is really thrown away in the position of the actual work. One special treasure of the Museum must be mentioned, viz., that of the quite unique and unequalled series of encaustic tiles from Chertsey Abbey, illustrating the romance of Sir Tristram and of Richard Cœur de Lion, showing how the very pavements at that time were made the vehicle for art of a noble kind.

The fourteenth century finds Continental art so far advanced as to be already on the road of decline, but that of England has paused again to form a fresh development. We have no new type abroad, but their complete Gothic

which had outstripped our Early English, gradually turns into the Flamboyant, the very name of which expresses the redundant and unrestrained—for stone has other office than to imitate flames. We have a large store of this class of work from Amiens, and it is the only one of which I think we have too much.

Mr. Ruskin, in his spirit of curious analysis, has discovered that dried dead leaves may be placed side by side with Flamboyant, and a striking resemblance between them seen. Now, though he is not enamoured of the strait-jacket-like traceries of English Perpendicular, he could not but allow that such intricate carving as that of the poppyheads in Ludlow Church are redolent with nervous, energetic life, and drawn and modelled in a marvellous manner.

But following the French ornament has led me too fast, for in England our fourteenth-century *Naturalesque* work was, like the thirteenth-century conventional work, elaborated into a style, and was dwelt upon till developed to perfection. The capitals and carvings from Southwell Chapter-house show how far human skill can be carried in life-like and minute imitation of natural foliage, and can be compared with advantage with the comparatively scraggy and formless capitals from the Sainte Chapelle of Paris, which happen to be placed alongside.

There is another distinctively English type of conventional ornament of this fourteenth century, belonging to our Decorated period of architecture. It is more architectural than the somewhat too-closely imitated *Naturalesque*. It is fine, free, flowing, and well modelled.

We have now, however, reached the fifteenth-century work, and I have already anticipated most of what I need remark as to the comparative character of the Continental and English. We are now certainly on the downward course, and have passed the zenith of Mediæval sculpture

and ornament, whatever may be thought of its architecture. The aspiring principles of Gothic may be found to have been carried further in this style. We cannot but view the fan-vaulting, and other of its great constructive achievements, as steps in advance. The general effect of the buildings may be grander, and more light and airy, but the excellence of the separate details has been sacrificed to these. The sculpture has become mannered, and its ideal is less elevated and its execution inferior. Yet it still possesses great interest, and the examples in this Museum of the figures from Nuremberg and elsewhere (Nos. 844-847) may be studied with advantage. (See Sketches H.) Much of the Perpendicular carving is of elaborate design and splendid execution—terms which can be applied to little of the Continental cotemporary work, which has degenerated there into unmeaning over-luxuriance, as in the Flamboyant of France, the coarse detail of Burgundy, and fantastic extravagance of Germany.

We must not, however, pass so hastily the very fine and unique collection of Venetian sculpture and carvings presented by Mr. Ruskin. The work of Italy during the Middle Ages was so distinct from other Mediæval north of the Alps, that it seemed better not to interrupt the description of the successive phases of those by any reference to the cotemporary Cisalpine work. The Italians were so surrounded by the remains of ancient Classic that they never could escape that influence. They seem to have been busy all the time with the preparation of what should follow when the Northern Gothic should have run its course, and, in fact, to have held a brief to usher in a Classic Renaissance on the first opportunity. In painting and in sculpture they were not idle, but tentatively engaged in preparing for the restoration of those higher arts. But they quite failed even to aim at such a combination of architecture and artistic decora-

tion as we have seen to have been realized in France and England.

Venice, however, was an exception to this general rule, and in that cosmopolitan city all the diverse artistic elements, Oriental and Occidental, met and produced a unique result, which has been so admirably and eloquently analysed by Mr. Ruskin. Those who would study the stones of Venice should come here to examine their casts. We have many from the noble capitals of the Doge's Palace and the Church of St. Mark; and in the latter may be noted the peculiar treatment of sculpture enforced by the nature of the material, which in this case was the costly one of marble. But the progress of art in Italy leads necessarily to the renaissance of Classic art, unfortunately based on that of Rome rather than of Greece, and to the development of its studio nature and characteristics. Roman art was false, though splendid, and Renaissance falser and even more the ministrant to luxury. Art no longer sought to teach or please the people, but to gratify and pamper the rich and the learned. It ceased to be original, and became the copier of copies. Painting, indeed, and Sculpture, bent on selfish courses, had a glorious independent existence, but as handmaids of Architecture they no longer existed or grew with it. Architectural ornament decayed; it sought no fresh *motifs*; it no longer studied nature, but began to reproduce continually the Roman acanthus, only with feebler and more formless foliage.

The Museum is not without casts of that nondescript stuff which the ornamentalists of the Renaissance copied from the Roman, and which our eclectic school of the day is fain to copy over again. This is the fashionable frippery which sprawls over and spoils our modern buildings, but it is not this which it is the ambition and desire of the school of this Museum to teach.

I have shown you what the Museum is and contains, and the list has been a long one. I would fain tell you what the Museum might be, and what it does not, but should, contain ; but the list would be longer. We ought, for instance, to have a sufficiently representative collection of the several schools of sculpture and ornament of the different provinces in France and in Rhineland ; and at any rate much good might be done by obtaining and arranging good photographs of the figures and details at Amiens, Rheims, Chartres, &c., that we might compare them with others from our own country. Expeditions might be arranged for sketching tours, with the object of examining and reporting on their remains *in situ*, and studentships for careful, prolonged research in different districts.

But seriously—Do we want art at all? and if so, should it not be healthy and Christian art, with aims higher even than that of the schools of Paris and Rheims, of Lincoln and Wells? We must then go in the same spirit as they did—to the same nature, which is as full of subject to us as to them. Nay, that store has hardly been even tapped as yet, its resources being boundless. But we must come here, or to a larger Museum which may grow out of this on the same lines, to study, and not to copy merely ; and the several arts must be united and grow together again, and not remain as now in stupid selfish isolation ; and instead of pandering to the purses, they should preach to the hearts of the people.

I feel strongly the necessity for more fully illustrating the foregoing Pamphlet, in order to make it sufficiently intelligible to those who are not fully conversant with all the examples referred to; and I should like to expand the Pamphlet itself. It will depend upon the encouragement that this small attempt meets with, whether or not I venture hereafter to develope it as I could wish.

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